



AETC News Clips

Laughlin AFB, Texas



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To the citizens of Del Rio, Laughlin AFB and Val Verde County

Editor,

In light of the past local radio talk show topics and newspaper articles as they relate to the injustice against the Air Force Junior ROTC program and two of their instructors: I feel it is necessary to give you the following information so you can draw your own conclusions.

In the 2003/2004 academic school year the Air Force JROTC instructors, Lt.Col. Wurmstein, Master Sgt. Scarbo and Master Sgt. Davila, were given Notice of Salary and Duty Assignment sheets that reflected what their pay would be in two separate components, base salary and stipend (something that was new and never happened in the previous 30 plus years.)

This action was taken without board approval.

The total of both of these dollar amounts equaled the usual annual salary.

The instructors did not dispute this manner of working/listing salary since the total was the expected amount.

For the 2004/2005 academic school year, instructors Wurmstein and Davila were informed just prior to the beginning of the school year that the stipend (previously noted, for the past 30 plus years as the Air Force Pass Through Money) would be eliminated and their salaries would be reduced by the amount of the stipend creating a salary loss for each instructor of more than \$16,000.

Scarbo was not notified since he was on emergency leave in Massachusetts attending to his mother's funeral. Because he was not notified in the timely manner required by state and school district policy he was able to file a grievance.

When Scarbo returned from Massachusetts in August 2004 and after speaking with the other instructors, he scheduled an appointment to see the Human Resource Director, Dr. Patricia McNamara.

She presented him with the notice of pay reduction. Scarbo then made an appointment to see the superintendent Roberto Fernandez for the following day.

Fernandez informed Scarbo that because the district was having hard times financially (supposedly in the RED), the pay for the instructors would have to be reduced.

Scarbo asked him why the reduction wasn't across the board, starting with him, and he said this was not possible.

Further investigation revealed that the JROTC instructors were the only teachers or staff to take such a drastic reduction (approximately \$47,000 total).

Only one other person in the district received a reduction and that was the athletic photographer who took a \$1,000 annual cut in pay.

Following this meeting Scarbo filed his grievance. (Special item of interest: for the 04/05 academic school year, all teachers and staff received a pay raise amounting to a total of approximately \$300,000. In the interim, Fernandez has received several contract extensions and pay raises.)

What happened to the hard times financially??

Taking a pay cut by the AFJROTC instructors would have been one thing if they did something wrong or the entire district was taking the cut due to supposed hard times; however, it appears that this drastic cut was directed solely toward the AFJROTC.

Following an eight-month grievance battle, Scarbo's full pay was reinstated in March 2005 by a unanimous vote from the school board.

At this meeting Scarbo was congratulated by board members Nora Escamilla and Leo Martinez.

Additionally, Scarbo and his attorney, Mr. Hanner, spoke with the board president Antonio Cadena and board member Joey Garcia and thanked them for the board's decision.

Scarbo asked if this was a one-time decision. Cadena and Garcia both replied, "No, this will be permanent."

Shortly after the reinstatement of Scarbo's salary, Davila's salary was also reinstated, even though he had not filed a grievance in the required time frame.

In June of 2005, Scarbo and Davila were told by the SFDRCSID that they did not need to sign new contracts of employment with the district; however, their salary would be the same as it was at the beginning of the 2004/2005 school year, reflecting the same

At this time both Scarbo and Davila filed another grievance.

On Nov. 12, 2005, Scarbo and Davila met the third level of their grievance, which was solely to discuss the lateness of their filing.

The district and their attorneys presented their case in view that when notification of intent to reinstate Scarbo's pay (following the board's action on the first grievance) that was also the time notification was made that the same reduction of 05/06 would take place.

Davila's supposed notification was shortly after reinstatement by certified mail; however, neither he nor Mr. Hanner had seen this notification.

The board's copy that was revealed in closed session was a photocopy with no signature by Davila.

A signed copy was not presented that night nor has it ever been presented to date.

The board's decision at the level three grievances regarding the lateness was unanimously against the JROTC instructors with the one board member being for and that was Yolanda Garza.

At the present time a filing has been submitted to the Texas Commissioner of Education on the matter of lateness.

The outcome of this case is still pending.

I have the feeling that the way this pay issue was handled is the major factor in the recent decision and announcement by Davila that they would be leaving the JROTC program at Del Rio High/Freshman School to seek more lucrative employment.

I know that Scarbo is also contemplating leaving the school district. The school district seems to have started down the slippery slope with the AFJROTC program.

I have to wonder if the handful of dollars Fernandez saved was worth the damage it has done to the previously outstanding AFJROTC program at Del Rio High School.

I am guessing that school district has spent more on attorney fees than the salary reduction they took from the AFJROTC instructors.

Lt.Col. EDWARD HANSON, USAF, Ret.
Senior Instructor, AFJROTC, Del Rio High School, 1983-1999

RE: Soundoff

Editor,

In response to the SOUND OFF of Thursday, April 27, 2006, in which the individual suggests that if the mayor and council members CARE about the people of Del Rio, they would put the issue in question up for a vote BY the people. . . I will say it is precisely because they CARE about ALL the people that they have placed themselves under such scrutiny and subjected themselves to the visceral attacks from those of you who hide behind the curtain of anonymity in your campaign to sully reputations.

And as to the accusations of "getting paid under the table," if the realtor who started this vile rumor has evidence of such dealings, let her come forth and present it for the community to see.

As to a vote BY the people, THE PEOPLE spoke when the mayor was elected to her present term, yet her then-opponent who is now leading the "let the people speak" coalition DID NOT accept the people's vote!

Droves of elderly voters were dragged into court in his quest to discredit the mayor's supporters.

The opposition KNOWS strategy well and Laughlin closing will always be an effective cry to scare people!

The mayor was appointed by the Governor of Texas, and is a member of a commission that oversees the preparedness of ALL military installations in this state. **Use your heads,** she would NEVER jeopardize Laughlin or its mission(s).

The caller says "everyone knows he is out to make a lot of money from this deal."

Isn't EVERY business out to make money? Being from out of town does not disqualify any business from making money in this town.

Newcomers to this community own EVERY single automobile business in town and no eating establishment is giving food away for free either!

Hispanic is not synonymous to ignorant!

Shame on you!

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Little Rock AFB, Ark.



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Little Rock will not be spared Air Force personnel cuts

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Ark. — Little Rock Air Force Base officials say there's no escaping personnel cuts that will affect the entire Air Force, beginning this fall.

The base was spared to some degree when the Pentagon's Base Realignment and Closure Commission made its recommendations last year and it wasn't on the list to be closed. But base authorities say the nation's biggest C-130 operation at the Little Rock air base will lose more than 270 active-duty airmen in the first round of reductions planned across the Air Force over the next five years.

It's not clear if the reduction might be offset in part — or entirely — by additional aircraft slated to be sent to the base under the BRAC realignment.

Earlier this year, the Air Force announced its numbers would be reduced by more than 40,000 personnel by 2011. Half of those cuts are to occur in fiscal 2007, which begins Oct. 1.

"We don't have any of the specific details down yet," an Air Force spokesman at the Pentagon said recently. "We do know there will be between 40,000 and 47,000 people affected by it."

That's about 12 percent of the 340,000 people now serving in the active-duty Air Force.

The plan, dubbed Air Force Smart Operations 21, calls for combining some career fields into a single military specialty, a move intended to consolidate some support roles while continuing to focus assets on war-fighting capabilities.

Few, if any, of the personnel cuts will involve operational roles such as pilots, air crews, mechanics and logistics.

"This is a matter of leveraging personnel cuts to modernize our fleet," said Brig. Gen. Kip Self, commander of the 314th Airlift Wing at the base.

The loss of 270 airmen would be 5 percent reduction in active-duty personnel at the base, where about 5,600 airmen are currently assigned.

Part of the Air Force plan is to eliminate what it calls "legacy aircraft" — planes considered too old and outdated.

The Arkansas National Guard's 188th Fighter Wing is losing its F-16 fighters to retirement as legacy craft. The older C-130 Hercules cargo planes at Little Rock Air Force Base are considered legacy aircraft and are targeted for eventual replacement by the new J model.

Self said many of the newer aircraft require fewer personnel, though, like the C-130J, which requires only a crew of three instead of the five needed by the older models.

Little Rock Air Force base was scheduled to gain six more C-130s and as many as 500 more personnel over the next five years under BRAC.

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“Now we just don’t know,” said Capt. David Faggard, spokesman for the base. “It is possible for those to go away, I suppose. But more planes require more personnel.”

The Arkansas base received a list of proposed position cuts from higher authorities on April 26. Base leaders analyzed the proposal and, on Tuesday, responded with suggestions on which cuts would work and which wouldn’t. Self said he opposed a reduction in firefighters, arguing that it would reduce the base’s mission capabilities.

“It would affect the landing zones, we’d be unable to use them without adequate fire support,” he said. “No one wants to impact the mission.”

An amended list of cuts arrived back at the base two days later, with a Monday deadline for feedback. Cuts will be implemented in October.

“This is on a very, very fast track,” Self said.



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Luke AFB, Ariz.



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azcentral.com

2 methods create similar success

May. 6, 2006 12:00 AM

One thing that's been a hallmark of Glendale, like most Valley communities, is the longevity of its leadership. Elaine Scruggs has been mayor for more than 10 years, and most of the City Council members' tenures are as long or longer.

In contrast, Luke Air Force Base sees a new commander roughly every two years. Come June, Gen. Robin Rand will be leaving Luke. He's being replaced by Col. (and soon to be Gen.) Noel Jones.

In a number of ways, a base commander's position is analogous to a mayor's. He or she sets a tone and a direction for the community. And with more than 7,000 people working on the base (and many of them living on it), Luke is a fairly sizable community. Aside from its vital defense role as a training site for F-16 pilots and crews, it has an economic impact far exceeding that of a typical small city.

So it's mutually beneficial for the base and Glendale and other nearby communities to have a smooth relationship. Scruggs has been a tireless supporter of the base, and Rand has been savvy about reaching out to this city and others in the West Valley.

Glendale has thrived under its stable leadership, while Luke has shown consistent excellence with the equivalent of a new mayor every other year. That fact that both are models of success may be illustrative of the difference between the civilian culture and the military one.

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I suspect that cultural difference may also explain the minor controversy over Glendale's acquisition of a heavy armored vehicle for its Police Department.

Just yesterday, we ran a column by Police Chief Steve Conrad defending the purchase of the BEAR vehicle with the help of federal Homeland Security funds.

A number of people have questioned whether this was the best use of taxpayer money. Given the vehicle's military appearance, along with police tactical officers decked out in military-style garb and weaponry, my guess is that a lot of them are simply uneasy about a growing militarization of the nation at large.

It might also reflect a growing unease over our invasion of Iraq and a lingering feeling of vulnerability after 9/11. One of the justifications for the purchase of the BEAR is that Cardinals Stadium and its huge crowds could be a tempting target for terrorists.

So the unease is understandable; we'll have to hope that the BEAR's missions are of the routine kind. In that sense, it'll be a relief if it turns out to be a pricey but ultimately unnecessary acquisition.

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In the meantime, Gen. Rand's next command will be in Balad, Iraq, where he'll be running the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing. Regardless of how each of us may feel about the wisdom of the war there, we should all hope for his safe return and that of the more than 6,000 American servicemen and servicewomen under his command.

Vinton Supplee is editor of The Glendale Republic.

The Arizona Republic

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West Valley View

The community newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ

5/5/2006

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Luke land-swap deal crashes, burns

Daniel Burnette
staff writer

A proposed land swap intended to help prevent encroachment around Luke Air Force Base has fallen apart, more than two years after land went into escrow to accommodate the deal.

Two landowners around Luke and a syndicator of one of the proposed land swaps confirmed in interviews with the *West Valley View* recently that the deal ended in early March, when contracts on the land expired after two years.

The plan actually would have involved a three-way transaction: Landowners, mostly farmers around Luke, would sell their land to a syndicate, which in turn would trade the land for federal Bureau of Land Management parcels throughout the state.

The proposal was much ballyhooed in 2003 when the proposal gathered momentum to trade private land near Luke for federal land farther west and south of the base. That way, the federal government would own thousands of acres near Luke and could control its use, while private landowners near the base could get other parcels of land with fewer restrictions on their use.

Encroachment has been a major criterion in deciding whether to close military bases. A number of public officials, business leaders and others feared that burgeoning residential development around Luke could lead to complaints about jet noise and fears of crashes.

Such complaints have led to the closure of other military aviation bases, including Williams Air Force Base in the East Valley.

Congressional support fades

The land-swap proposal seemed to gain steam Nov. 18, 2003, when the Governor's Military Facilities Task Force released its "recommended strategies" for keeping Arizona's military bases from the federal closure list.

Among the task force's "to do" list was to seek legislation through Congress to permit such land swaps to occur.

"The enabling legislation should ... include provisions to authorize the BLM to sell at public auction certain public lands and use the proceeds from such sales, within the state of Arizona, to purchase nonfederal lands, on a willing-seller basis, which may be identified as necessary to protect the long-term mission viability at military installations

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in Arizona,” the 10-page document states.

Several members of Arizona’s congressional delegation hailed the proposal, including two Republicans who seemed to take the lead: Sen. John McCain and Rep. Trent Franks, area landowner Michael Francis said.

“Everybody was willing to stand in the limelight when this [proposal] came out. But somewhere between then and early this year, the congressional action to make this happen never materialized,” Francis told the *View*. “I couldn’t tell you why. I’d like to know the answer, but I haven’t gotten any explanation.”

Several calls to the respective spokeswomen — Andrea Jones for McCain and Lindsey Mask for Franks — were not returned. Likewise, McCain’s defense liaison, Chris Paul, did not return telephone inquiries about the land-swap proposal.

“There are a lot of property owners here left holding the bag, trying to do the right thing for Luke,” Francis said.

The nail in the coffin

Property owners and real estate investors took the proposal quite seriously from the start.

As many as three deals may have been in the works over the past 2 ½ years to effect the land swaps, including one that Nevada-based Olympia Group put together involving some 6,000 acres and about 25 property owners, said John Bullington of Olympia Group’s Scottsdale office.

Olympia Group had some experience in such swaps, having handled one involving several thousand acres around Nellis Air Force Base, near Las Vegas, several years ago.

“Some of the circumstances were different, but we have had a good deal of experience in these kinds of transactions,” Bullington said. “We weren’t the only ones putting together a deal for land around Luke, we heard there were a couple of others.”

“The contracts were signed, but it finally came down to the expiration periods coming and going, and finally, it was pretty clear it wasn’t going to happen,” Bullington added.

The nail in the coffin was the release of the latest list of military base closures from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, released last May, Bullington said. Much to the relief of many in Arizona, Luke wasn’t on the list.

The commission, known as BRAC in shorthand, was created by Congress in the 1990s to try to take some of the politics out of closing U.S. bases in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The commission makes its recommendations to Congress, which cannot pick and choose which to accept. Lawmakers have to vote the list up or down.

“The land swaps got criticized by some as trying to BRAC-proof their bases,” Francis said. “This was the right thing to do to protect Luke, so I don’t know why this thing of ‘BRAC-proofing’ came up. It wouldn’t have cost the federal government anything, because all the trades would be based on fair-value appraisals.”

Land is a bargain

West Valley landowner and rose grower Leyton Woolf Jr. agrees that the land swap would have been the best way

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to protect Luke from encroachment.

“If the federal government owns the land, that’s the best and easiest way it’s going to be protected,” Woolf said.

Still, Woolf said he went into the deal with his “eyes wide open.”

“I knew from the beginning that it was going to be a very difficult deal to get done,” Woolf said. “It just had too many moving parts. It involved all of these surveys and appraisals and an act of Congress.”

Even though he thinks getting the land into the hands of the federal government ultimately would be the best way to go, there are other options to prevent encroachment, Woolf said.

“A lot of people still think this land has to be houses or farm land, but those aren’t the only options,” Woolf said.

“The state statutes already prohibit new residential development in the noise zones. And depending on how close you are to the base, there are still a lot of uses for the land. My land is in the 65-decibel zone, and you can have just about any commercial development in that zone that you can just about anywhere else.”

Bullington agrees.

“A lot of the property owners have alternatives now,” Bullington said. “Two and a half years ago, you couldn’t do some of the kinds of development that you can now. Today there’s a lot of activity. You have people with the vision to develop commercial and light industrial parks that you didn’t see a few years ago.”

Among the projects in the works are a millwork company and a window company, Bullington said. He characterized the area as a “red-hot prospect” for many kinds of development.

“When you’re talking about land near the Scottsdale Airpark going for \$25 a square foot and maybe \$15 a square foot near Deer Valley Airport, the land around Luke is a bargain with a lot of it available for \$1 a foot,” Bullington said. “That’s a lot more than many of the landowners expected to get out of it three years ago.

“So everybody’s happy, except maybe us, since we’re out a few million bucks. I’m just kidding about the few million bucks — sort of.”

Daniel Burnette can be reached by e-mail at dburnette@westvalleyview.com.



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WHMC, Lackland AFB, Texas



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Maithim, a medic in the Iraqi health care system, was the victim of a Baghdad car bomb. He came to the Air Force Theater Hospital in Balad for treatment of his amputated arm. Caring for the Iraqi patient are Air Force Capt Warner Tse, RN (left), and an Air Force medic. Photo by Janet Boivin, RN.

In Iraq, Care Wins Hearts and Minds

Transcultural health care is more than just a politically correct buzzword for U.S. military nurses stationed in Army, Air Force, and Navy medical units throughout Iraq. Almost on a daily basis, those who care for Iraqi patients negotiate a field of potential cultural land mines that can be triggered by language barriers, ethnic and religious differences, and uncertain relationships between U.S. and coalition forces and Iraqi civilians.

Yet, since the early days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, many of the patients transported to U.S. military medical units in Iraq have been Iraqi civilians, enemy prisoners of war (EPWs), and insurgents. Almost three years into the war, Iraqi patients, including children, still frequently lie on the thin, hard mattresses found in military medical units. The number of Iraqi civilians admitted to U.S. military facilities in Iraq dating from February 2005 to January 2006 was 1,935, according to Sgt. Doug Anderson with the Combined Press Information Center in Baghdad.

On Sept. 29, 2005, when a terrorist bomb went off in the Iraqi village of Balad killing 10 people and severely injuring about 40 civilians, more than 29 of the injured were taken to the Air Force Theater Hospital on the nearby U.S. air base. Physicians, nurses, and medics went into mass-casualty mode, at one point running six ORs simultaneously and calling in every staff member available.

Traumatic injuries from the blast included severe abdominal wounds requiring temporary or permanent colostomies, fractured limbs, head wounds, and first-, second-, and third-degree burns. Most of the patients, who included men, women, and children, required more than one complicated, often life-saving

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surgery, according to the hospital's military nurses and physicians.

And once the initial surgeries were completed, many patients returned for follow-up procedures, wound washouts, dressing changes, cast and external fixator adjustments, and self-care education, says Col. Donna Smith, chief nurse of the OR at the time. If an Iraqi patient could not perform self-care, then a close relative accompanied him or her to the American hospital to be taught by the nurses.

"Our goal was to teach them to do their own medical care and then to get them back into their health care system," says Smith, an active duty Air Force nurse who in the U.S. is assigned to the Air Force's Wilford Hall Medical Center in Texas.

She learned much of the country's nursing care takes place in the home and not in war-damaged hospitals. "The care families give to patients is remarkable," Smith says.

Smith also discovered that home nursing care is not relegated only to women. In fact, Iraqi women usually are not allowed to visit family members in the U.S. hospital. It is the husbands, sons, brothers, and fathers who arrive at the gates of Balad Air Base to be picked up and transported to one of the two largest U.S. hospitals in Iraq.

Iraqi men have been taught to change colostomy bags, dressings, and even diapers, Smith says. "The men come to the hospital and then teach their wives," she says.

When *Nursing Spectrum* visited the Air Force Theater Hospital in June 2005, a 50-year-old Iraqi man was feeding lunch to his sister, 52. She had been sent to the Air Force hospital because she had a brain tumor the Iraqi hospital couldn't treat.

Through a translator, the brother said his sister was receiving good medical care and was being fed well. Before this experience, he did not have a positive opinion of Americans because of the soldiers he saw carrying weapons and riding in heavily armored vehicles in the Iraqi streets. But his sister's hospital experience was changing his view of Americans, he said.

Maithim, another Iraqi patient at Balad, would at times help staff calm some of his fellow patients and serve as interpreter during his hospital stay this past spring. A

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medic at the Iraqi hospital in Balad, Maithim had been shopping for CDs in Baghdad for his brother's birthday when a car bomb exploded. The blast fractured his left leg and tore off an arm at the shoulder.

Iraqi physicians kept Maithim alive, but they could not properly close the amputation wound because it was so high on his arm. He was eventually taken to the Air Force hospital. His left humerus was still exposed, says Capt. Warner Tse, RN, who frequently worked in the Iraqi units when he was deployed to Balad last spring and summer. Air Force physicians were able to better close the wound.

Iraqis also fill Army, Navy beds

Army Col. Olga Rodriguez, RN, chief nurse of the 228th Combat Support Hospital (CSH) that was stationed in Mosul, Iraq, for a year, says at any given time 80% of the patients in the hospital were non-U.S. service members. The majority of the 80% were Iraqi civilians, says Rodriguez, a Reserve nurse who returned from Iraq in November.

"We were told from high up to provide one standard of care," she says.

The mandate from the Army Medical Department and the Department of Defense is that all Iraqi patients receive the same level and quality of care as any U.S. service member, says Rodriguez, who as a civilian is director of the orthopedic line at The Methodist Hospital in Houston.

At the start of the war, Iraqi EPWs were some of the very first patients to be flown to the Navy's hospital ship, the USNS Comfort, stationed in the Persian Gulf. That trend would continue during the several months the ship was in the Gulf. Iraqi EPWs were held and guarded on one level of the ship while Iraqi civilians, including mothers and children, were housed on a different level, says Navy Lt. Cmdr. Angela Nimmo, RN, who served on the Comfort for two months.

Although nurses, physicians, and corpsmen had talked about what they would do if Iraqi patients and EPWs were brought to the ship, it was more of a what-if discussion, says Nimmo. "I don't think we expected to take on the role that we did. We certainly didn't anticipate the volume [of patients]."

Providing care to Iraqi civilians, some of whom might be insurgents, sometimes causes ethical conflicts for military nurses. The instinct of a military nurse might be to provide care for a U.S. soldier first, but that response is inappropriate if a

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civilian patient's condition is more urgent. Also, supplies and equipment in a war zone are often limited, so military medical personnel must use resources to their best advantage, always keeping in mind a mass casualty could occur at any time.

Navy Cmdr. Cheryl R. Ruff, RN, a nurse in Iraq during the first months of the war, says patients who medical personnel first thought were Iraqi civilians sometimes turned out to be EPWs.

"We treated a lot of EPWs," Ruff says. She often worked in the tent that received patients with abdominal and head and neck injuries. EPWs had more of these types of injuries than U.S. service members because the combatants lacked the advanced body armor worn by U.S. military members.

In her recently published book, *Ruff's War: A Navy Nurse on the Frontline in Iraq*, she writes, "We also tried to come to grips with our obligations under the Geneva Convention ... I prayed every day I would find the strength to make the best decision and to do what was right."

To help resolve ethical quandaries, the 228th CSH held a medical ethics conference for some 200 military medical personnel. "We looked at the ethics of combat from different angles," says Rodriguez. "We talked about how our mission was to provide care not only to the U.S. military and coalition forces but also to innocent bystanders and sometimes to the enemy. We talked about how people needed to verbalize their feelings and how to deal with the challenge of having to care for Iraqi patients."

Cultural puzzles

The lack of a common language is the most difficult barrier to overcome when providing nursing and medical care to Iraqi patients. But Col. Laurie Hall, RN, who served as the chief nurse of the Balad Air Force Theater Hospital this past spring and summer, says sometimes all it takes is a gesture as simple as holding a hand to let patients know they will not be harmed no matter what opinion they have of Americans.

Because of other cultural differences between Americans and Iraqis, a sign hangs in the Iraqi units in the Air Force hospital spelling out a few basic rules of conduct in both Arabic and English. The rules include the statements "Order and discipline will be maintained at all times. No violent or rude behavior. No touching the medical staff."

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It is not unusual for military medical units to treat injured or ill insurgents, whether they are Iraqi or other nationalities. But these patients are usually separated from Iraqi civilian patients and U.S. service members who are patients. EPWs also are shackled and guarded around the clock by military police.

Nurses as ambassadors

Rodriguez says that during her year in Iraq, she helped remind and support the hospital's nurses about providing one standard of care for all patients.

Her nurses, she says, "were absolutely great. A number of them learned some basic Arabic and worked through the cultural biases."

Military nurses say they hope the care they give to Iraqi patients will help bring understanding between the two cultures.

"I do believe we make a difference," says the Air Force's Smith. "The care we provide is state of the art, and I believe [the patients] will go back and tell their families. Ours is a soft mission, not delivered by bullets and bombs."

Editor's note: *In our next issue, we'll report more of the challenges U.S. military nurses face in caring for civilians and detainees in Iraq's war zone.*

Janet Boivin, RN, is editorial director for Nursing Spectrum's Greater Chicago and New England editions. To comment on this story, e-mail editorsc@nurseweek.com.

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